

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 0813

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PDIP PGOV PINS MP US US EFIS MARR OAU ONGA

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER'S COMMENTS ON MAURITIAN-SOVIET  
RELATIONS, THE MARXIST OPPOSITION, AMBASSADOR TO UN RAMPHUL,  
AND SOVIET BASE AT BERBERA

SUMMARY. IN THE COURSE OF A LENGTHY, INFORMAL CON-  
VERSATION WITH SIR HAROLD WALTER, MINISTER EXTERNAL  
AFFAIRS, ON JULY 31, HE CONFIRMED THAT MAURITIUS'  
RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION HAVE BEEN DETERIORATING  
AND SOVIET AMBASSADOR IS BEING TRANSFERRED. PRIMARY  
REASON IS PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM'S ANNOYANCE THAT  
SOVIETS HAVE BEEN "WORKING WITH" THE MARXIST-ORIENTED  
OPPOSITION PARTY, THE MAURITIAN MILITANT MOVEMENT  
(MMM). WALTER ALSO REITERATED RAMGOOLAM'S WISH TO  
MEET WITH PRESIDENT CARTER WHEN HE IS IN THE U.S. FOR  
UNGA IN SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER. END SUMMARY.

1. I ASKED WALTER IF THE TOAST HE GAVE AT SOVIET  
AMBASSADOR'S DINNER IN HIS HONOR JULY 22, WHICH HAD  
SOUNDED VERY MUCH LIKE A FAREWELL, MEANT THAT SAFRONOV  
WAS LEAVING FOR GOOD. (SAFRONOV DEPARTED JULY 26 ON TWO  
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MONTHS' LEAVE IN USSR AND DENIED TO ME HE WAS BEING  
TRANSFERRED.) WALTER SAID HE HAD MEANT IT TO SOUND LIKE  
A FAREWELL, FOR IN FACT SAFRONOV HAS LEFT FOR GOOD AFTER  
ONLY A 16- MONTH TOUR HERE. "THINGS HAVE NOT BEEN GOING  
VERY WELL FOR THEM HERE," WALTER SAID, THE REASON BEING  
THAT "WE KNOW THEY ARE WORKING WITH THE MMM."  
WALTER CLAIMED THAT "ALL" SOVIET INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS

ATTACHED TO THE EMBASSY SPEAK CEROLE, "AND THAT CAN HAVE ONLY ONE MEANING," MANELY THAT THEIR JOB IS TO MIX INTO DOMESTIC MAURITIAN POLITICS.

2. WHEN I ASKED HIM WHY IT HAD BEEN NECESSARY TO SIGN A CULTURAL AND EXCHANGE AGREEMENT WITH SAFRONOV THE DAY PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE (SINCE THE AGREEMENT HAD ALREADY BEEN SIGNED SOME MONTHS AGO) WALTER SAID IT HAD BEEN FRESHLY ADMENDED AT GOM INSISTENCE. AMENDMENTS INCLUDED REQUIREMENT THAT STUDENTS GOING TO USSR ON SCHOLARSHIPS MUST HAVE OBTAINED HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE, MUST HAVE COMPLETED SEVEN YEARS OF SECONDARY EDUCATION AND MUST BE APPROVED BY GOM. WALTER SAID GOM HAD REFUSED TO INCLUDE A REFERENCE TO THE EXPIRED FISHERIES AGREEMENT THAT SAFRONOV HAD REQUESTED.

3. SIR HAROLD SAID IN HIS LAST MEETING WITH SAFRONOV HE HAD SUGGESTED THAT SOVIET EMBASSY SHOULD BE REDUCED IN SIZE. THEY NOW HAVE 32 RUSSIAN NATIONALS AT EMBASSY, ACCORDING TO WALTER. HE SAID HE TOLD SAFRONOV THEY SHOULD REDUCE TO A "REASONABLE" LEVEL, AND CITED THE AMERICAN EMBASSY, REPRESENTING A COUNTRY THE SAME SIZE AS THE USSR, WHICH HAS ONLY NINE AMERICAN OFFICIALS. SAFRONOV'S REACTION WAS TO ASK FOR A MEETING WITH RAMGOOLAM TO DISCUSS THIS QUESTION. ACCORDING TO WALTER, RAMGOOLAM TOOK SAME LINE HE HAD. "SAFRONOV SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT I WOULDN'T SPEAK THAT WAY WITHOUT CLEARING IT WITH THE OLD MAN FIRST," WALTER  
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COMMENTED.

4. WALTER SAID THAT AT OAU SUMMIT IN LIBREVILLE, RAMGOOLAM HAD COUNTERED ANY POSSIBLE "FUSS" ABOUT DIEGO GARCIA BY SHOWING AROUND AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS WE HAD GIVEN HIM OF SOVIET BASE AT BERBERA. WALTER CLAIMED THIS WAS EXPLANATION FOR LACK OF MENTION OF DIEGO GARCIA AT THE CONFERENCE. "AFTER ALL, THOSE PICTURES DON'T LIE. THEY ARE VERY CONVINCING."

5. SIR HAROLD SAW SINISTER DESIGNS IN MMM LEADER BERENGER'S PLANNED VISITS TO EASTERN EUROPE AND COUNTRIES IN THIS REGION WITH "LEFTIST" GOVERNMENTS (PORT LOUIS 0808 (NOTAL). HE WENT SO FAR AS TO ALLEGE THAT BERENGER IS "PREPARING A COUP" IN THE MANNER OF RENE IN THE SEYCHELLES. WHEN I REMARKED THAT BERENGER DOES NOT SEEM FOOLISH AND HAS THUS FAR DONE VERY WELL PURSUING THE ELECTORAL ROUTE TO POWER, WALTER SHIFTED AND SAID "I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT IT. WE'RE READY FOG THEM. THEY CAN'T SUCCEED." WALTER ADDED THAT HE HAD RECENTLY RECEIVED AN EMISSARY FROM BERENGER WHO HAD COMPLAINED ABOUT WALTER'S VERBAL ATTACKS ON THE MMM LEADER IN THE FINAL SESSIONS OF THE

ASSEMBLY IN JUNE, NOTING THAT IN THE PAST WALTER HAD COME TO BERENGER'S DEFENSE WHEN HE HAD BEEN IN TROUBLE OF VARIOUS KINDS. WALTER SAID HIS RESPONSE HAD BEEN THAT HIS "DOOR WAS ALWAYS OPEN," BUT BERENGER HAD NOT YET COME TO SEE HIM. (IN THE PAST WALTER HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN VARIOUS EFFORTS TO EFFECT A MERGER OR ALLIANCE BETWEEN HIS LABOR PARTY AND BERENGER'S MMM.)

6 ON ANOTHER SUBJECT, WALTER SAID HIS ATTEMPT TO HAVE RADHA RAMPHUL REMOVED AS MAURITIAN AMBASSADOR AT THE UNITED NATIONS HAD FAILED, AS THE "OLD MAN" (RAMGOOLAM) REFUSED TO "SACK" OR TRANSFER RAMPHUL. I ASKED WHAT ACCOUNTS FOR RAMPHUL'S GOOD STANDING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER. "VERY SIMPLE," WALTER REPLIED. "RAMPHUL  
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MARRIED THE OLD MAN'S NIECE." WALTER CLAIMED THAT RAMPHUL IS NOW AT LEAST TAKING ORDERS FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTER WHEREAS IN THE PAST HE WAS "A LAW UNTO HIMSELF."

7. THE FOREIGN MINISTER REITERATED RAMGOOLAM'S WISH TO HAVE A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER WHILE HE IS IN THE U.S. IN LATE SEPTEMBER AND EARLY OCTOBER TO ATTEND THE OPENING SESSIONS OF THE U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY. HE SAID HE AND RAMGOOLAM WOULD BE LEAVING MAURITIUS ABOUT SEPTEMBER 10, TO SEE GISCARD D'ESTAING IN PARIS AND TO ATTEND A DANISH SOCIALIST CONFERENCE IN COPENHAGEN ON THE WAY TO NEW YORK. I SAID I HAD PASSED ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S REQUEST, BUT THAT THE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE FOR THE PERIOD IN QUESTION HAD NOT YET BEEN MADE UP, AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT DID NOT KNOW IF A MEETING WOULD BE POSSIBLE (PORT LOUIS 562; STATE 135208 (NOTAL). WALTER REPEATED THAT RAMGOOLAM HAS MET WITH EVERY RECENT U.S. PRESIDENT AND VERY MUCH WANTED TO MEET PRESIDENT CARTER.  
KEELEY

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